

TITLE 281 - COORDINATING COMMISSION FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION
CHAPTER 8 - RULES AND REGULATIONS CONCERNING REVIEW OF
PROPOSED NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

001 GENERAL PROVISIONS

001.01 Statutory Authority. §85-1414 relating to Commission establishment of "an ongoing process to review, monitor, and **approve or disapprove...the new...programs** of public institutions...which use tax funds designated by the Legislature in order to provide compliance and consistency with the comprehensive statewide plan and to prevent unnecessary duplication."

§85-1411 (4) relating to Commission authority to adopt, amend, repeal or otherwise implement, such rules and regulations as the Commission deems necessary to carry out its duties under the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education Act including an ongoing process of reviewing, monitoring and approving or disapproving the new and existing programs of public institutions which use tax funds as provided by law.

85-1402 (5) relating to the definition of program of instruction.

001.02 Scope, Application, and Related Provisions. The following rules and regulations apply to new programs proposed by public institutions, as said institutions are defined by law, which programs were not authorized by action of the governing board of a public institution or the Legislature on January 1, 1992.

The review of proposed instructional programs shall be subject to the rules contained herein, the statewide comprehensive plan and planning process, budgetary review, and procedures and such other rules and regulations as shall be promulgated by the Commission.

New programs may also be reviewed by the Commission pursuant to its responsibilities for budget review and review of off-campus programs and education centers.

The Footnote Section contained herein shall not be construed as a part of the Rules of the Commission, but are used for illustrative purposes only.

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002 INTENDED PROGRAM REVIEW OUTCOMES

Review, monitoring, and approval or disapproval of new instructional programs shall bring about:

- (a) Quality and effectiveness of the programs
- (b) Achievement of educational needs, and
- (c) Assurance of efficiency and avoidance of unnecessary duplication.

002.01 Quality and effectiveness shall include, but are not limited to:

002.01A The education and/or training received by students which is needed to meet reasonable standards for employability, preparedness for graduate study, or to function effectively in a body of enlightened citizens

002.01B Probable institutional results given available resources

002.01C The institution's proposed means to evaluate achievement of quality.

002.02 Meeting Educational Needs shall include, but is not limited to enhancing:

002.02A Societal needs. Appropriate liberal arts education and postsecondary education programs which offer individual and societal benefits that may be independent of manpower or market demand consideration, as these programs address valid needs. Such programs provide immeasurable returns to the State, nation and world in part by instilling in citizens a capacity for advanced learning, providing a source of new knowledge and imparting an understanding of the fundamentals of civilization.

002.02B Occupational and professional needs. Appropriate instructional programs intended to improve the student's employability or ability to achieve advancement address valid needs. Likewise, it is appropriate to consider the employer's perspective that seeks availability of an adequate pool from which to draw qualified employees and/or to provide knowledge and skills to enhance the competitiveness of the business or provide service by the organization.

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002.02C Equal opportunity and the extent to which the proposed program contributes to greater access and choice.

002.03 Efficiency shall include, but is not limited to, a comprehensive set of reliable and valid indicators to assess a program's cost/revenue performance. In particular, efficiency shall be concerned with whether the purported cost and revenue outcomes of the proposals are achievable and, if the program is approved, are ultimately achieved.

002.04 Unnecessary Duplication shall include, but is not limited to, consideration of whether the proposed instructional program will facilitate effective use of public funds by its existence in comparison to other instructional programs with similar intent, or, by duplication, reduce effective use of public funds. Unnecessarily duplicative programs do not substantially increase access and/or serve valid educational needs considering other programs in Nebraska public or private postsecondary education, in other states, or consortia such as the Midwestern Higher Education Commission Compact, without imposition of relative inefficiencies demonstrated in such comparisons.

003 DEFINITIONS

003.01 The following definitions shall apply to proposals to establish a new instructional program which shall include substantial modification of an existing program.

003.01A An instructional program is a sequence of instructional courses or activities leading to a degree. A program is commonly called a major and it excludes what is commonly called a minor or a support area. It includes the statutory definition that a program leads directly to a degree, diploma, or certificate.

003.01B An existing instructional program is an instructional program authorized by action of the Legislature or the appropriate public institution governing board prior to January 1, 1992.

003.01C A new instructional program is an instructional program that was not authorized by action of the Legislature or the appropriate public institution governing board prior to January 1, 1992. A new instructional

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program includes one which is the result of substantial modification after January 1, 1992 of a program in existence prior to January 1, 1992.

003.01D Substantial modification of a program occurs when the principal objective of the program is changed from the preceding objective.¹ Reasonable and moderate extensions to an existing program will not change the program's principal objective.

Institutions must specify, for the purposes of the Commission, the majors offered within the degree. Except in unusual circumstances as may be designated by the Commission, institutions shall not merge majors into a generic degree. The Commission requires that all proposals for new instructional programs be stated and documented separately from other majors or departmental offerings.

003.02 A new instructional program is indicated by one or more of the following conditions:

003.02A The proposal establishes an instructional program leading to a degree, diploma or certificate in a subject area in which such degree, diploma or certificate is not presently authorized.²

003.02B The proposal establishes an instructional program in a subject area in which a degree, diploma or certificate is offered at a different degree level.³

¹Example: An Associate in Applied Science Degree originally intended to prepare individuals to be in secretarial/clerical positions is changed to prepare people to become office managers.

²Example: An institution wishes to offer a B.S. in Chemistry, but currently offers only the B.S. degree in other fields of study.

³Example: An institution awards the B.S. in Chemistry and wishes to award an M.S. in Chemistry.

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003.02C The proposal establishes a new major by combining course work offered in two or more existing degree programs.⁴

003.02D The proposal establishes a degree, diploma or certificate of a different type in a subject matter area in which another formal award at the same level is already offered.⁵

003.02E The proposal combines aspects of the above which would achieve an outcome equivalent to creating a new institutional program as defined above:

Procedures of the Commission may require reporting of other changes associated with existing programs to permit Commission determination of whether a substantial modification to an existing program is proposed or has occurred.

004 REVIEW CRITERIA

Review criteria for proposed instructional programs shall include the following:

004.01 Centrality to the role and mission of the public institution. The proposed program shall be consistent with the institutional role and mission, as defined by law and approved by the Coordinating Commission. Except in unusual circumstances, only those programs that are consistent with the institution's role and mission shall be approved.

004.02 Consistency with the comprehensive statewide plan. The proposed program shall be consistent with the comprehensive statewide plan as defined and approved by the Commission. Except in unusual circumstances, only those programs which are consistent with the statewide comprehensive plan shall be approved.

⁴Example: An institution wishes to offer an A.A.S. in Robotics Technology by combining course work offered in its current A.A.S. programs in Electrical Technology and Mechanical Technology.

⁵Example: An institution awards the Master of Science in Management and wishes to offer a Master of Business Administration.

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004.03 Objective evidence of need and demand. Institutions proposing new programs shall present appropriate data to demonstrate the need for the program. Adequate data shall also be provided to support projections for the number of students who are expected to enroll in the program. Elimination of unreasonable program duplication shall be a high priority of the Commission. Institutions shall demonstrate that the proposed program is not unnecessarily duplicative of similar offerings in the geographic service area, other areas of the state, and the region, as considered under Mid-West Higher Education Commission alternatives, among other alternatives.

004.04 Adequacy of available or anticipated resources to support the program and indicators of program quality.

004.04A Program of Study. The institution shall provide a structured and coherent program of study with clearly delineated program objectives.

004.04B Faculty and Faculty-related Academic Resources. Faculty and faculty-related academic resources shall be adequate and appropriate for the proposed program, given the institution's mission and the character of the program to be developed.

004.04C Library Resources. Library resources shall be adequate and appropriate for the proposed program.

004.04D Physical Facilities and Instructional Equipment. Physical facilities and instructional equipment shall be adequate to initiate and maintain the program.

004.04E Resources and Costs. The availability of fiscal resources shall be adequate to meet the objectives of the program, and the expenditures necessary to conduct the program shall be reasonable. The program shall be efficient in its resource utilization and be considered in the context of the institution's overall need for funds.

004.04F Access and Choice Provisions. The proposed instructional program will improve access and choice, including identification of specific actions and strategies to improve recruitment and retention of minorities and other under-represented groups. As appropriate, provisions related

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to student financial aid, transferability of credit, and economic development considerations should be addressed.

004.04G Accreditation. Consideration to seeking appropriate accreditation shall be evident when accreditation may be prudent and in the best interests of program graduates.

004.04H Impact. Sources and numbers of students for the program shall be defined (e.g., from another program, transfer from community colleges, etc.). The proposal shall define how success of the program is measured and provide estimates of success according to those success indicators. After approval of proposals, the Commission shall evaluate whether the institution met projections and seek explanations for deviations deemed unacceptable to the Commission.

004.04I Additional Information. The institution shall provide other information that, in the opinion of the Commission, is necessary to make an adequate examination of the proposal.

005 ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

005.01 Prior to submitting a formal program proposal, that proposal shall first receive written approval by the governing board. Evidence of that approval shall accompany the formal proposal to the Commission and it shall include all material submitted to the governing board and upon which the governing board made its decision.

005.02 All new programs approved by the Commission shall, within a time as stipulated by the Commission, meet minimum performance standards established by the Commission pursuant to said approval. If an approved program fails to achieve or maintain minimum performance standards, the Commission shall review the program and may withdraw its approval for the program.

005.03 Any program authorized by action of the Legislature or a governing board, and in existence prior to January 1, 1992, shall be deemed approved until reviewed by the Coordinating Commission under its procedures to review existing programs.

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005.04 The range of educational activities, programs, facilities and other resources of public and private postsecondary educational institutions in Nebraska shall be considered in the review process for proposed new instructional programs.

005.05 The Commission shall have 120 days from the date of receipt of a complete program proposal in a format provided by the Commission to approve or disapprove a program or the proposal shall stand approved. To assure Commission budget review action regarding a new instructional program proposal that requires new general fund appropriations in the next session of the Legislature, the proposal should be submitted to the Commission no later than March 15th.

005.06 The Commission shall provide procedures to implement these rules and regulations.

005.07 The Commission shall be the determining body to approve or disapprove program proposals. Parties wishing to appeal decisions of the Commission shall proceed as provided by law.

006 SHORT-TERM TRAINING AND PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAMS

The Commission shall provide a waiver procedure for specific, short-term job training programs and short-term public service programs, as delineated in Commission procedures.

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